church has seasons as an aid to focusing on different aspects of Christian faith. This month sees the start of the season of Lent. Often dismissed simply as a time to “give up chocolate” Lent is in fact a season in the Church’s calendar to pay special attention to the disciplines of faith. It’s a time to engage with the seriousness and rigour of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I was struck recently by words in 1 Timothy 4:8 where Paul draws a parallel between physical training and godliness. Sarah and I are currently trying to follow a training schedule to get us fit to run a Half Marathon at the end of March. The schedule includes 3 runs or activities each week to improve our fitness.

Paul recognises the value of such physical training, but goes on to say that training in godliness is surely even more important. How committed are you to getting spiritually fit?

The season of Lent offers us chance to consider our spiritual training schedule—how do you pray? What time do you commit to reading the Bible? How serious are you about getting rid of bad habits and living a holy life?

So this month may I encourage you to use Lent to improve your spiritual fitness, and train in godliness. Come to the Lent Course. Don’t just give up chocolate but do something that takes seriously Jesus’ call to follow him.

**Real Lyfe—Lent Course**

**Tuesday evenings, 8.00pm—9.30pm**

**in the Church Hall**

**Starting Tuesday 28th February**

This year’s Lent Course will consider some of the topics Christians traditionally turn to in Lent. How can we live with integrity? How do we become the person God wants us to be, so that we routinely and easily do the right thing? How can we be the same person on the inside and outside? How do we handle temptation? Frustration? Doubt?

Using resources produced by the Bible Society, including video clips, discussion questions, Bible studies, talks... the Lent Course will explore these issues.

*Holiness is world-affirming. The holy life is found smack in the middle of everyday life.* – Richard J Foster

The course will run for 6 weeks and is open to all. Each session will stand alone, so if you can’t make every week, come when you can. There’ll be refreshments and a chance to meet others.

www.lyfe.org.uk

**Christians working in Schools**

An evening for all teachers, teaching assistants and school governors.

**Tuesday 7th February, 7.00pm**

**in the Church Hall**

to reflect on what it means to be a Christian working in school, to share ideas and resources, and to encourage one another.

The evening will begin with a buffet meal, followed by a presentation by Libby Leach (newly appointed Diocesan Advisor for Schools’ outreach) discussion and prayer.

Please speak to Ben if you are able to attend.
**Church Notices**

Please take a copy of Steve & Debs Taylor’s latest prayer news. They are planning to return to the FAITH ACADEMY later this year but will need extra financial support to do so. Please commit to praying for the family and for their future.

Subscriptions are now due for the 2012 editions of the Parish Magazine. A bargain at £4.80 for 12 monthly magazines. Containing more news than we can squeeze into Connections, the magazine informs, encourages and amuses.

Ben Topham was recently accepted to train for ordination. We rejoice that God has confirmed this calling, but will be sad to see Ben leave us at the end of August to begin training at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. It is the PCC’s intention to advertise for a new Youth and Children’s Worker to follow Ben and continue ministry with children, young people & schools. A letter about this is available for all who contribute to the Youthworker account. Extra copies are at the back of church.

There will be 2 service of Holy Communion on Ash Wed (22nd Feb) - 10.00am here at St. Lawrence’s, and 8.00pm at St. John’s, Knyperley.

The next service rota and rotas for those who read the Bible in church will be available this month.

Please continue to pray for Trevor Raaff as he continues his study at Ridley before coming to continue his training as Curate at St. Lawrence’s.

Martin and a number of others are attending a conference “Learning Healing Ministry” at Christ Church Alsager, 2nd-4th March. This would be excellent training for anyone on the Prayer/Care teams or
interested in healing ministry. More details from Martin or the Office.

Women’s World Day of Prayer Friday 2nd March @ 2pm. Biddulph Methodist Church. All are welcome—men women & young people to join in prayers offered by the church in Malaysia.

The clergy and churches in Leek are planning to run The Bishop’s Certificate course. This is a one year course offering a basic introduction to theology and a foundation for authorised ministry in the Diocese. If you are interested in exploring Christian faith and ministry in this way, please speak to Martin.

Hi, my name is Pauline Hodges. I am married to Jeff and we have two sons, Stephen who is 36, and Mark who is 35.

I am a retired Primary School Teacher and since retiring, Jeff and I have enjoyed spending time in France and have also travelled to the U.S.A. several times to visit our son Mark in California. I also enjoy reading, gardening and photography.

St. Lawrence’s church has always been a part of my life. I attended Sunday School here from the age of four onwards and was later confirmed here. Jeff and I were married here and we will celebrate our 40th Wedding Anniversary in July this year. Our children were both christened, went to Sunday School and were later confirmed here.

During those years, when our children were growing up, I helped run the Toddlers Group, taught in Sunday School, also taught each summer at V.B.S. (now Vibes), and was involved in lots of other church activities too.

More recently, I have served on the P.C.C. and am now also a Deanery Synod Representative, as well as being on the Sidespersons’ Rota and reading the lesson at evening service.

I am enjoying my role as part of the Re-ordering Committee, and feel deeply about the challenge to combine both the dignity, solemnity and history of the church interior, with the need for modernisation, to enable growth and expansion of the church, both now and for future generations. This is a task which requires much prayerfulness from each one of us, and with God’s grace will cater for the needs of the church family and the wider community for many years to come.
Day Of Prayer

Women’s World Day of Prayer Friday 2nd March 2pm
Biddulph Methodist church

On Friday 2nd March @ 2pm, there will be an opportunity to join with over 3 million people worldwide, who will be praying and worshipping together, during an annual Women’s World Day of Prayer, using a form of service prepared by Christian women in Malaysia. Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody, demonstrating our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend.

Jean Hackett, president of the National Committee of the Women’s World Day of Prayer movement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, said: ‘This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in the Queen Salote Girls School in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place, some 35 hours later, in neighbouring Western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and more than 6,000 services will have been held in the British Isles alone.’

Message Board

Is there anything you need for home, garden, camping use etc?

Before you buy, please ask me (Anne Argent) if I have it. Everything free, unless you feel that you would like to make a contribution for a bigger item, then a donation to the Church Refurbishment would be great.

I MUST empty the house by March 1st Can YOU possibly help me out??

Please ’phone me
on 01260 277 288
or email on
anne.argent@dsl.pipex.com

Prayer

Praise God for
His promise to never leave nor forsake his people
The free gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Please pray for
Christians living in Northern Nigeria and experiencing persecution
The people and situation in Syria
Our partner church St. Paul’s Syongila, Kenya
all who work in our local schools
the Lent Course and those preparing for it
Those taking part in the Beyond Ourselves course
All church members responding to the challenge of “Fit for Service”

Marriages: for the Marriage Preparation Day on 11th Feb and all getting married at St. Lawrence’s in 2012
the bereaved family & friends of Roy Pickering, June Squires, Marjorie Lowe, Jason Boulton, and Alan Amos
for those with particular needs incl Richard White, Gary Frain, Maggie, Peter & Jessica Hughes, Carole Dale, Craig Dawson, Pru Atikins, Peter Bailey, Nicholas Bourne, Jody Shaw and Francis Brown

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